Public Speaking Tips

Taken from Fox Talks, Power of Tweaks

Public speaking ranks number 1 on the list of the most common fears.

Check the “fear ofs” that apply to you:

* Embarrassing yourself
* Forgetting your material
* Appearing foolish
* Boring the audience
* Not knowing what to do with your hands
* Not knowing where to look
* Saying too many umms and errs
* Sounding stupid
* Shaking and sweating
* The audience asking you questions

If you checked:

0-2 You just need a few small tweaks. Keep reading.

3-6 Keep reading and do all of the Practice Plans for 5 minutes, twice a day.

7-10 Keep reading. Do all of the Practice Plans every chance you get!

Ask Ms. Stephens for help in the future.

**1. Speak Tweak 1**: “Umm umm, err uhhhh uhhhh, ahhh, ahhh…..you know, you know.”

Sound familiar? These are verbal pauses.

Practice Plan 1:

* Pretend someone asked you a question – right now. Got it in your mind?
* SHUT your mouth before starting to speak the answer.
* Say a few words out loud.
* SHUT your mouth to think about your next phrase. Then finish your sentence.
* Let’s try that again.
* Answer this question out loud:

What was the last thing you thought about before you fell asleep last night?

* SHUT your mouth. Think first.
* SHUT your mouth. Stop to think.
* Finish your answer. SHUT your mouth.

**Umm Err can’t slip out of a shut mouth!**

2. Speak Tweak 2: Your EYES are your connection to your audience. LET THEM HELP YOU SPEAK!

You want to look straight at your audience when you speak. Do not look over them like a hovercraft, and do not look down at your shoes.

Practice Plan 2:

* Tell your family or a good friend that you need to practice eye contact.
* Start by just quietly staring into someone’s eyes for 10 seconds.
* Let them talk for the 10 seconds while you look.
* THIS IS VERY HARD TO DO! Try again.
* At dinner, force yourself to look into someone’s eyes, at least, for a couple of sentences as you start to speak. If you look away, start again and look straight into their eyes.
* Try to draw energy from those eyes.
* Practice this 5 minutes a day. Keep trying by adding a few more sentences each time.

3. Speak Tweak 3: What do I do with my HANDS?

Even if you don’t speak, your body tells the audience something about you.

Practice Plan 3:

* If your voice is big and loud and your gestures are small, they are a mis-match. It’s not a smooth impression.
* If you turn your hands inward, you can look like you are excluding your audience.
* If you lean against the board, you look like you lack confidence.
* If you lean on a table or podium, you look like you lack energy and passion.
* If you put your hands in your pockets, it can keep you from reaching out to your audience. They see you as standoffish.
* Also don’t fold your hands in front of you.

So, what do you do? Put power in your hands.

* Shake hands with 3 people. Make sure the skin between your thumb and forefinger hits the other person’s.
* As your hands are clasped, slightly unfold your fingers. That hand is now in the perfect position for gestures.
* Practice talking to your friends using that gesture.
* Pay attention to what your hands do naturally. Use it!
* If you are showing size or excitement, extend your arms way out.

4. Speak Tweak 4: Work the room. Pasted to the board is not good.

BUT…don’t be a:

Busy Bee: flitting from place to place

Nervous Pacer: pacing from side to side

Scared Turtle: trying to hide or disappear

Standing Target: standing in one place (this is okay for a 2 minute presentation)

Consider yourself a Conductor. Walk to one side of the room WITH PURPOSE. Talk a little. Walk to the other side and talk.

Practice Plan 4:

* Walk with a purpose, as you speak.
* Take a couple of steps.
* Keep talking.
* Make eye contact with your audience.
* Talk.
* Look.
* Make a connection.

Keep going….one more!

5. Speak Tweak 5: Speak from key words, not from memory. Your note cards should look like this, for example:

What is art?

Patterns

Expressing Emotions

Show Visual

Practice Plan 5:

* The next time you give an oral presentation, use key words.
* For practice, the next time you call someone, use a note card and make key words about what you want to talk about.
* Get used to doing it.

You can do it!